
IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

JANUARY 27, 1857.

Read twice, and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

AN ACT

Relinquishing the claim of the United States to certain property of which Elijah King died seized and possessed, in the District of Columbia, upon certain specified conditions.

Whereas it has been represented to the Congress of the United States that one Elijah King, an emancipated slave, died intestate recently in the city of Washington, in the District of Columbia, seized and possessed of, and entitled to, real estate in said city of considerable value, leaving a wife, Christian King, a slave, the property of one William A. Stephenson, of the county of Fauquier, and State of Virginia, to whom the said Elijah, whilst they were both slaves, was married by John B. Armistead, a justice of the peace, with consent of the owners of both said Elijah and said Christian, and having also two sons, Bayliss King and Thomas King, issue of the marriage, the said two sons being slaves, and owned by one Robert Carter, of said county and State: and whereas it is doubtful whether said wife and children can, by reason of their condition as slaves, lawfully take and hold said real estate by inheritance, in which event it is believed that said real estate, for want of lawful heirs of said Elijah King, has vested in the United States: and whereas it is represented to the Congress of the United States that the owners of the said slaves, the wife and sons, are willing to emancipate and set free the said slaves, and thereby invest them with power to take, hold, and enjoy

said real estate, provided the United States will release to and vest in them all right, title, and interest to and in said real estate, which may have vested in the United States—one-third of said right, title, and interest to be held and enjoyed by the wife for life, and the other two-thirds, with the reversion of the wife's third, by the sons absolutely : Therefore—

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives*
 2 *of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
 3 That so soon as the said Christian King, and the said Bayliss
 4 King and Thomas King, the wife and sons of the said Elijah
 5 King, shall have been emancipated and set free by their
 6 owners, respectively, all right, title, and interest to and in the
 7 real estate of which the said Elijah King shall have died
 8 seized, possessed, or entitled, which by default of his having
 9 left heirs capable of inheriting from him shall have vested in
 10 the United States, shall be, and the same is hereby, vested in
 11 the wife and sons, to be held, owned, and enjoyed by them—
 12 one-third by the said wife for life, and the other two-thirds,
 13 with the reversion of the wife's third, to the said sons abso-
 14 lutely, with full power to sue for and recover such right, title,
 15 and interest, as is hereby vested or intended to be vested in
 16 said wife and sons.

1 SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted,* That in the event
 2 either or any two of said slaves shall be emancipated and set
 3 free in contemplation of the provisions of this act, and the
 4 owner or owners shall decline to set free all of them, the pro-
 5 visions of this act shall inure to such as shall be emancipated

6 and set free. If the wife alone be emancipated and set free,
 7 then the said right, title, and interest shall vest in her abso-
 8 lutely; if the two sons be emancipated, and the wife be not,
 9 then said right, title, and interest shall vest absolutely in said
 10 sons, or in one of them, if but one be emancipated; and if the
 11 wife and one son be emancipated, then the wife shall hold and
 12 enjoy one-half of the said real estate for life, and the son shall
 13 take and hold the other half, and the reversion of the wife's
 14 half, absolutely: *Provided, nevertheless,* That this act shall
 15 not be construed to affect or impair in any manner, or to any
 16 extent, the legal or equitable rights, titles, or interests of other
 17 persons, if any such there be, to or in such real estate. This
 18 act shall take effect and be in force from and after the passage
 19 thereof.

Passed the House of Representatives January 27, 1857.

Attest :

WM. CULLOM,

Clerk House of Representatives.